emerging areas of agriculture and allied fields for capacity building of senior level and middle level extension functionaries of the states. These MTCs are organized through State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institutes and Other Central/ State Institutes having facilities and expertise to provide training on identified specific areas. During the year 2005-06, 79 such MTCs are being sponsored through 58 Centres/Institutes in the country. Also training of farmers is an eligible activity under the scheme "Support to State Extension Programme for Extension Reforms" under which funds are provided to the states on Work Plan basis.

Special package for cotton production

1275. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to provide special package for cotton production with a view to boost the production of cotton in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the extent to which the cotton producing farmers are likely to be benefited by this special package; and

(d) the measures taken by Government to dissuade cotton producing farmers from taking the extreme step of suicide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) In order to improve production, productivity and quality of cotton in the country, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Mini Mission-ll of Technology Mission on Cotton is under implementation in 13 States *viz.;* Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Under the Scheme, assistance is provided for the production and supply of certified seeds of varieties/hybrids not older than 15 years, transfer of technology through frontline demonstrations, training of farmers through Farmers Field School (FFS) and extension workers, insecticide resistance management, maintenance of nucleus resistance management,

maintenance of nucleus and breeder seeds, plant protection measures including IPM demonstration, supply of sprayers, pheromone traps, bio-agents as well as water saving devices like sprinklers and drip irrigation system. These developmental and extension activities have benefited farmers through increased production, productivity and reduced cost of cultivation through control of insects and pests.

(d) Government have taken several steps to provide relief to the farmers. The banks have been advised to reschedule/restructure the debt of farmers in distress and in arrears, grant one time settlement facility for setting overdue loans of small and marginal farmers and to advance loans to the farmers for repaying the loans taken from non-institutional sources. The farmers are also protected against natural calamities through National Agricultural Insurance Scheme. Further, to protect the interest of the cotton growers, Government of India announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) of cotton every year and whenever the market prices of Kapas touch the Minimum Support Price level, the Cotton Corporation of India in the Ministry of Textiles undertakes Support Price Operation and purchases Kapas without any quantitative limit. In addition, Government of India have also authorized the National Agricultural Cooperation Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) in 2004-05 to procure cotton at Minimum Support Price.

Target for foodgrain production

†1276. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to double the production of foodgrains in the country by the end of Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard and the names of the foodgrains alongwith their respective targeted production by the end of the Plan;

(c) whether any annual increase rate has also been fixed right now in order to achieve the target of this production; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.